

Message Text

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SUBJECT: REGIONAL CONGRESS OF THE DC IN PALERMO

REF: PALERMO 0150

1. SUMMARY: THE DC DURING ITS REGIONAL CONGRESS HELD IN PALERMO ON APRIL 9-11 RECONFIRMED ROSARIO NICOLETTI OF FORZE NUOVE AS REGIONAL SECRETARY OF THE DC AND ELECTED A NEW REGIONAL COMMITTEE AND DIRECTORATE. NICOLETTI DEFENDED THE CONFRONTO WITH THE PCI AT THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY BUT FLATLY OPPOSED THE PCI'S WISH TO JOIN THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT AFTER THE JUNE 13 ELECTION. THE NEW COMMITTEE OF 60 COMPRISES 35 NEW FACES. END OF SUMMARY.

2. ON APRIL 11, THE REGIONAL CONGRESS OF THE DC UNANIMOUSLY RECONFIRMED ROSARIO NICOLETTI OF FORZE NUOVE AS REGIONAL SECRETARY, ELECTING A NEW REGIONAL COMMITTEE AND A NEW UNITARY DIRECTORATE. THE NEW COMMITTEE CONFIRMED THE FACTIONAL DISTRIBUTION DETERMINED BY THE FEBRUARY 28-29 DC CONVENTION (REFTEL).

3. THE WINNER OF THE CONGRESS WAS MINISTER ANTONIO GULLOTTI, WHO LEADS THE PRO-PCI CONFRONTO CARTEL IN SICILY. IN A LOW-KEY ADDRESS, GULLOTTI SAID THAT THE CONFRONTO WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN OPERATION AT THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY SINCE NOVEMBER 1975 IS A MODEL FOR THE WHOLE COUNTRY.

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4. ROSARIO NICOLETTI DEFENDED THE CONFRONTO WITH THE PCI,

WHICH HE ORIGINALLY CONJURED UP AND NURTURED WITH VIGOR, BUT GAVE A FLAT NO TO THE PCI'S WISH TO JOIN THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT GIUNTA AFTER THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS. NICOLETTI JUSTIFIED THE CONFRONTO AS A STATE OF NECESSITY. THE ALTERNATIVES TO THE CONFRONTO WOULD EITHER BE "SCONTRO" WITH THE PCI OR GOVERNMENT WITH IT. THE DC REJECTS BOTH COURSES. THE DC'S OFFICIAL NEGATIVE ANSWER TO BERLINGUER'S MARCH 28 SPEECH (PALERMO 0226) WAS GIVEN FULL PLAY IN THE PRESENCE OF SICILY'S TOP PCI LEADERS, WHO WERE OBSERVERS AT THE CONGRESS.

5. THE DECISION OF BOTH BRANCHES OF THE IMPEGNO DEMOCRATICO FACTION, THE PALERMO-BASED LIMA CHAPTER AND THE CATANIA-BASED DRAGO CHAPTER TO SIDE WITH GULLOTTI AND NICOLETTI ON THE CONFRONTO ISSUE WAS DECISIVE IN THE IDEOLOGICAL ISOLATION OF MINISTER GIOIA'S FANFANIANI. THE FANFANIANI REACHED THE PEAK ANTI-COMMUNIST VERBOSITY BUT LIKE THE OTHERS HOPPED ON NICOLETTI'S BAND WAGON.

6. COMMENT: THE WHOLE TONE OF THE CONGRESS WAS LOW-KEY AND HUMDRUM. THE CHOICE OF A PLATFORM FOR THE REGIONAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN WAS POSTPONED TO ANOTHER DATE. LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES GIVE THE LEFTWING (FORZE NUOVE E MOROTEI) A LEVERAGE THAT DOES NOT DERIVE FROM THEIR MODEST NUMBERS. WHILE GULLOTTI AND GIOIA STILL HAVE THE NUMBERS, THEY NO LONGER HAVE THE "MORAL" LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY. OF NOTE, 35 OF THE 60 NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE NEW FACES. CHIAVARINI

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